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Whittemore Medal Awarded to Former UNH Dean

By [Michelle Gregoire](#)
UNH News Bureau

July 11, 2000

DURHAM, N.H. -- Jan Clee, former dean of the Whittemore School of Business and Economics at the University of New Hampshire, recently was awarded the inaugural Laurence F. Whittemore Distinguished Service medal.

The Whittemore School established the award to recognize an individual from industry, government or education who made a meaningful and lasting contribution to the school's growth and development. The medal was presented to Clee by Laurence Whittemore's son, Frederick Whittemore, advisory director at Morgan Stanley/Dean Witter, a member of the school's executive advisory board and co-chair of university's capital campaign; and Michael Merenda, interim dean.

Clee, a professor of organizational behavior, served the Whittemore School as dean from 1967 to 1977. A native of The Netherlands, Clee was active internationally in the fields of business education and business administration. Serving in the Organization for European Cooperation and Development, Clee worked on behalf of the Netherlands in the development of pediatric clinics and the education of teenagers.

Arriving in the U.S. in 1960, he worked as a consultant for companies such as Standard Oil, Curtiss-Wright, Westinghouse and the Hotel Corporation of America. He continues to be involved in organizations such as the Graduate School of Public and International Affairs in Pittsburgh and the International Institute of Social Studies at The Hague. Now retired, he resides in Portsmouth.

As dean, Clee nurtured and shaped academic programs at the Whittemore School during its most formative years. Under his leadership, the Whittemore School graduated its first master's of business administration class, established its Ph.D. program in economics and grew its hospitality program by offering students industry practicums.

"He led new and creative curriculum initiatives by working with faculty in developing courses in entrepreneurship, theory of organization and small groups, interpersonal and multi-cultural relationships and health care delivery systems" according to Merenda. "He was the catalyst for the school's successful executive development program."

He held the Whittemore School together during the political and social unrest that engulfed educational institutions in the late 1960s and early 1970s. When other institutions fought with student protestors, he opened the new McConnell Hall to the students, making it 'Strike Central.' "He encouraged open communication and turned an explosive situation into a peaceful, enriching and lasting learning experience," said Merenda. Jan Clee's service to UNH, to his native country, and to improvements in human relations and education internationally, exemplify the standard set by Laurence Whittemore."

Laurence Whittemore, born in Pembroke, worked his way to the top of the Boston & Maine Railroad, the Federal Reserve Bank, and the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad. He also served as president and chairman of the board of the Brown Company.

While he never formally attended college, Whittemore earned eight honorary degrees, including an honorary doctor of laws degree from UNH. In 1954 he received UNH's highest honor, the Pettee Medal, in recognition of his support to the university, including five years as president of the board of trustees. In the late 1950s, he received the first Academic Freedom Award of the national American Association of University Professors, for his defense of academic freedom at UNH. In 1961, a year after Whittemore's death, the trustees named the new business school in his honor.

The inaugural medal was presented at a reception at the New England Center attended by more than 100 people, including members of the Whittemore Executive Board, university officials, faculty emeriti and business leaders. Fred Whittemore and portrait artist Holmes Giraldo unveiled an oil portrait of Laurence Whittemore, which his son donated to the school. It will be displayed in McConnell Hall.

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